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June 2008's US Open produced one of the most unexpected and dramatic showdowns in golf history. Day after day the invincible Tiger Woods was challenged by Rocco Mediate, a respected journeyman. On Sunday, both ended play tied at par, forcing a playoff. Defying expectations, Mediate played Woods to yet another tie, losing only after forcing a sudden-death showdown.

Through it all, Rocco Mediate emerged as one of the most likable, open, and fascinating golfers. In ARE YOU KIDDING ME?, he tells the full story of these five life-changing days. With John Feinstein, whose insider knowledge of the golf world is unparalleled, Mediate relives one of sport's greatest feats, how one man overcame every obstacle to challenge the game's finest.

Are You Kidding Me?: The Story of Rocco Mediate's Extraordinary Battle with Tiger Woods at the US Open Details

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David says

Feinstein, as usual, gets inside his subject's life in a manner unlike any other sports journalist. If at times his stroke-by-stroke analysis of a particular round of gold gets a little - shall I say it? - boring, keep on reading. The pressures of the tour and their effect on a marriage are thoughtfully discussed.

Lexi says

When John Feinstein is at his best, he can be giving the play by play of a game I saw live, and I still find myself completely riveted, hanging on his every word with the irrational thought that maybe it will end differently this time around.

Rrager15 says

This is strictly for golf lovers. The first half of the book is a recap of Rocco's life. The second half recounts the amazing 2008 U.S. Open battle between Rocco and Tiger Woods. Since everyone who reads this book will already be aware of the outcome, it lacks any tension or suspense. Feinstein is an accomplished writer who's books have been very enjoyable. Unfortunately I found this to be a blah read.

Lisa says

I was at last year's Open on Saturday and Monday so I had to read this book to relive one of the most amazing sports events I've ever seen. Feinstein always does a great job of putting you in the middle of it all. My only beef is that I felt there were a few digs at Tiger in a very quiet way. Still, all in all, a good read.

J.W. Cunningham says

Based on the title, one would not think of this book as being a biography. However, Feinstein and Mediate worked to use the entire life of Rocco Mediate to frame the story of this one golf tournament. I am a huge golf fan and thus picked up the book for that reason, but anyone that enjoys reading about people who make opportunities happen for themselves should enjoy this book. This book is much more about accomplishing the American dream than it is a golf tournament. This book is a perfect picture of what one can accomplish when they have the determination to keep working. This was truly a great sports book, but an even great motivational story.

Brady Grafton says

The epic battle between Rocco Mediate and Tiger Woods is well shown in this book as how crazy and heroic Tiger Woods was. Tiger being on a bad leg just coming off of ACL surgery ends up muscling out one of the true gutsy performances of his career. The Monday playoff was even more intense then the final round were Tiger pulled out a magical run to force the playoff and eventually beat Rocco Mediate in 19 holes of playoff golf. I recommend this book to anyone that is an avid golf fan.

Derek Bycraft says

An interesting look into the life of a golfer. If you are not a golf fan, this book probably will not interest you. Even if you just play golf casually, it probably isn't for you. People who love to play golf and watch tournaments every weekend will enjoy this book. There's nothing extremely shocking or breath-taking, just a good reflection of a life that led up to a very memorable US Open in 2008.

Chris Denison says

The greatest story ever told. I love Rocco

Jeffrey says

Rocco Mediate became the story of the 2008 US Open, seemingly coming out of nowhere to force an 18 hole play-off against Tiger Woods. The story is told by Rocco and the great John Feinstein in, *Are You Kidding Me?* Rocco is known on the tour as a talkative and fun guy, and this book is of the same. Rocco tells of his life with a light touch that cements his place with the best on the PGA Tour.

This is not a swing by swing account of the Torrey Pines match, but rather a biography of Rocco as a player on the tour. His story is interesting because he is interesting, but the obvious hand of Feinstein makes this another great golf book to read. The struggles of the journeyman golfer that finds age and injuries starting to do him in just as the greatest golfer in a generation (and one of all-times) is beginning to devour the tour is compelling reading for all fans of the sport. I was spell bound in the early chapters and found that I read the book in far less time than I could have played a round.

As this is the weekend for the US Open, this book was a great reminder about the true drama that can be a golf match, even if Tiger still prevails.

Turi says

I was lucky enough to notice a twitter post from Little, Brown (publisher) about this book, and was sent a free copy. Really, though, I would have paid for this book. I think I've read everything golf-related that John Feinstein has done, and I've got a soft spot for Rocco Mediate, and "everyman" golf hero.

"Are You Kidding Me" is really a biography of Mediate, focusing in the last third of the book on his battle with Tiger Woods at the 2008 US Open. It's great to get such an inside look at the history and background of a golfer like Rocco, and Feinstein worked closely with him to get it done right. Recommended for any golfer who watched the Open last year.

Mahlon says

I've been critical of many of John Feinstein's recent efforts, which is why I was so pleased to see that he has almost regained that mid-90's form with his latest book.

Are You Kidding Me chronicles the historic battle between Tiger Woods and Rocco Mediate for the 2008 U.S. Open Championship at Torrey Pines, already considered by many to be one of the most exciting Major Championships ever contested. The first half of the book is a Mediate Biography, but it's the second half of the book where Feinstein really shines. He takes the reader inside the ropes as only he can, describing the action in a way that will keep you on the edge of your seat, even though you already know the outcome.

I did find errors, and I felt that Feinstein glossed over Rocco's relationship with his therapist, but otherwise this is a solid effort. I also wish that he didn't feel the need to continually remind us that the majority of PGA Tour Pro's are Republicans. I, for one, like my sports books free of political statements.

Are You Kidding Me is a fast(I read it in 3 days) fun Summer read, and a must for Golf fans.

Joe says

Good story on both ends. Showed Rocco's struggles with his back and family issues, and how he was able to hang in through his career and play some good golf. It was also fun remembering how dominate Tiger was back then, how he always seemed to get every break even after hitting off the reservation countless times.

Kevin says

As the players struggle to get their rounds in at rain soaked Bethpage Black what better time to take a look back at last years amazing US Open golf tournament. Are You Kidding Me?: The Story of Rocco Mediate's Extraordinary Battle with Tiger Woods at the US Open by Rocco Mediate and John Feinstein does just that and in entertaining and enlightening fashion.

For those of you not golf fans, or who inexplicably didn't follow the amazing events of last year, here is recap. Tiger Woods was coming of April knee surgery and hadn't played a 18-hole round of golf before the US Open started. Many wondered if Tiger would finish the tournament. But if Tiger is in the field then he is the favorite; and he had won at Torrey Pines, the US Open site, many times including earlier that year at the Buick Open.

Rocco Mediate was a successful PGA journeyman whose bad back had kept him from achieving the kind of

success his talent might have brought him. He was more famous for his talkative demeanor than for competing in majors. If you had to pick a player that would challenge Tiger Woods for a major championship, and in spectacular fashion, you would not have picked Mediate.

But last year these two very different golfers produced one of the most memorable US Opens in golf history. Tiger mixed in some very ugly golf with the kind of shots only Tiger can make to storm to the lead after 54 holes. Thirteen times before Tiger has taken the lead after three rounds and thirteen times he has won. And yet Mediate pushed Tiger to the brink; twice forcing him to make birdie on the final hole to stay alive.

Mediate in turn frequently seemed about to fade away and let Tiger grab another spectacular win. But on numerous occasions he pulled himself together and played remarkable golf in the most pressure cooker of situations (three successive birdies on the Monday playoff to take it to sudden death). In the end it took Tiger 92 holes to beat Rocco. Tiger may have had a bad knee, but Rocco still forced arguably the greatest golfer of all time, and one of sports most dominant competitors, to use everything he had to win. And Tiger labeled it his greatest win ever.

You don't have to be a golf or sports fan to appreciate the drama and appeal of this story. But what Mediate and Feinstein offer in *Are You Kidding Me?* is not just a shot by shot recap of the tournament – although the coverage of the event is well done – but rather a better understanding of the person and golfer behind it. As a pretty avid fan of the PGA I knew who Rocco Mediate was and knew of his back problems. But I didn't really know that much about his career and how he came to be on the Tour. It turns out that Rocco wasn't a high school or college superstar but rather someone who came to golf relatively late and who became a pro through hard work and dedication.

Sure, Mediate clearly had talent and athletic ability (his dad was a semi-pro baseball player and avid golfer) but he wasn't one of those young phenoms who everyone expects to join the PGA and make a splash. He didn't win a college national championship or US Amateur championships, but his personality was such that when he wanted to do something he put his whole heart and mind into it. And that is exactly what he did with golf.

AYKM also provides an interesting snapshot of what it is like to make a living on the PGA Tour. It shows the growth of the tour, and the explosion of purses post-Tiger, but it also highlights all of the myriad decisions and the emotional roller coaster ride that the tour involves if you are not one of the elite players. Qualifying through Q-school; worrying about making enough money to keep your tour card; figuring out which tournaments to play; knowing when to rest and when to play; managing your finances; working with coaches, caddies and mentors to improve your game; dealing with the logistics and difficulties of having a family while being on the road; all of these and more go into being a successful tour professional. Watching golf on TV, or even in person, you might not be aware of all that goes on behind the scenes and in the golfers' lives.

What stands out in this story is Mediate's struggle with back problems. All golfers struggle with back pain, and Rocco is not the only one to have his career threatened by injury, but his story is an interesting one nonetheless. The up and down nature of the injury made for a very challenging career. When he was healthy Mediate was one of the better players on tour and, particularly if his putter was hot, a threat to win most weeks. But if his back flared up he could end up face down in the parking lot unable to move or stuck mid-round trying to figure out how to finish the round without embarrassing himself.

Mediate made a lot of money on the PGA Tour as Tiger's impact on the game pushed purses higher and higher. But imagine wondering if your career, and your only real opportunity to make a living, could go

away with one twist of muscle. It is a testament to Mediate's determination and dedication that he never gave up. And this competitive nature helps illuminate what led him to challenge Tiger Woods last year at Torrey Pines.

All of this struggle and all of this pain made the amazing days last June all the sweeter for Rocco. He got his dream of facing the best player on the planet for a chance to win the US Open. And he gave it everything he had and came within inches – a rotation of a golf ball one way or the other – from winning it. Even losing that week changed changed his life, but there will always be a bitter-sweet element to it. As Rocco has said many times: "I lost. The other guy won."

The fact that he did so with so much skill, courage and good humor, however, only added to the incredible events last summer. His obvious enjoyment of the game and of the moment reminded us why we love sports. And it caused millions of people all over the world come to appreciate his character and his game.

Are You Kidding Me? is a must read for golf and sport fans – and would make a great Father's Day gift. But you don't have to be a fan of the game to appreciate the story. It really is a classic tale of overcoming adversity and giving your best when everything is on the line and letting the chips fall where they will.

Who knows what will come of this year's Open. Maybe another incredible fight to the finish will result from the weather problems. But last years battle at Torrey Pines will be remembered for a long time. And Rocco Mediate and John Feinstein have told the story as no one else can.

Evan Kirby says

The only reason we ever really talk about Rocco Mediate is because of Tiger Woods victimizing him at the 2008 U.S. Open and rightfully this book mainly focuses on that. The rest is just by the numbers biography stuff, and really Mediate isn't the most interesting character, but the U.S. Open recollection is fine enough.

Alan Livingston says

I really enjoyed this book, and I don't believe just because I was there at the 2008 US Open at Torrey Pines. This is my first John Feinstein book, and I found his telling of this great sports story like listening to someone over a beer after a round. Granted, it's first and foremost a golf story for golf lovers.

Feinstein is able to grasp the magic of Rocco Mediate while proving to us what a truly accomplished professional golfer he is. At the same time, he cuts through the Darth Vader image of the Tiger Woods of the time to render him likable. Yes, the focus is on Rocco, and Rocco deserves that. You can't say Tiger's performance wasn't legendary, because it was, winning the Open on a broken leg and all. But Rocco deserves his due, for his career, but mainly for this week. Hearing the thrill that Open gave him while he thrilled us all makes for a lot of fun.

Note that as fun as I found it, I did NOT read it twice, as Goodreads says I did. I spent as much time trying to correct that as I ever care to before I gave up. Only read it once, FYI.
